

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 043544

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-01 CG-00 OFA-01

DLOS-04 /073 R

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NEA/RA: D MORRISON

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R 240210Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EAID, PFOR, BEXP, EG, XF

SUBJECT: BOYCOTT ON CANAL PASSAGE

1. WASHINGTON POST CARRIED ASSOCIATED PRESS STORY DATE-LINED CAIRO, FEBRUARY 21, UNDER HEADLINE ISRAEL SHIPPING BLACKLISTED.

2. QTE: ISRAEL SHIPPING BLACKLISTED, CAIRO, FEB 21 (AP)-ARAB LEAGUE BOYCOTT OFFICIALS IN PORT SAID HAVE BLACKLISTED ALL SHIPS THAT TRANSITED THE SUEZ CANAL TO OR FROM ISRAEL UNDER LAST YEAR'S DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN CAIRO AND TEL AVIV, AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES SAID TODAY.

THE LATEST SHIP WAS THE AMERICAN BULK CARRIER YELLOWSTONE,
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PAGE 02 STATE 043544

PLACED ON THE BLACKLIST TODAY FOR HAVING CALLED AT THE

ISRAELI PORT OF HAIFA LAST MONTH.

THE SOURCES SAID THAT, AS IN THE CASE OF ALL THE OTHER BLACKLISTED SHIPS, EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS REFUSED TO SERVICE THE YELLOWSTONE WHILE IT WAS IN EGYPTIAN PORTS.

HOWEVER, EGYPTIAN PILOTS GUIDED THE NEW YORK-REGISTERED SHIP THROUGH THE 105 MILE CANAL BECAUSE THE CANAL IS REGARDED AS AN INTERNATIONAL WATERWAY.

THE SOURCES SAID AN OFFICIAL OF THE ARAB BOYCOTT OFFICE BOARDED THE VESSEL AT PORT SAID AND EXAMINED ITS LOGBOOK. IT SHOWED THE HAIFA STOP JANUARY 29, AND ON THAT BASIS WAS PLACED ON THE BLACKLIST.

UNDER THE BLACKLIST RULES, SHIPS THAT CALL AT ISRAELI PORTS ARE AUTOMATICALLY BANNED FROM STOPPING AT ARAB HARBORS. THE BOYCOTT WAS ESTABLISHED AFTER THE CREATION OF ISRAEL IN 1948 BUT HAS BEEN APPLIED WITH VARYING DEGREES OF SEVERITY SINCE THEN.

SIX VESSELS, INCLUDING THE 11,034-TON YELLOWSTONE, HAVE GONE THROUGH THE CANAL SINCE THE PACT WAS SIGNED BY EGYPT AND ISRAEL LAST SEPTEMBER. THE SOURCES SAID THE SHIPS' CAPTAINS WERE TOLD THEIR VESSELS WERE BLACKLISTED FOR HAVING CALLED AT ISRAELI PORTS.

IN TEL AVIV, ISRAELI OFFICIALS MINIMIZED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLACKLISTING. A FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN SAID IT WOULD ONLY VIOLATE THE TRUCE ACCORD IF IT PREVENTED PASSAGE THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL.

ONE OFFICIAL SAID: 'IF CERTAIN OBSTACLES HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THE WAY OF ONE OF THESE SHIPS AT AN EGYPTIAN PORT, IT CERTAINLY WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF THE SPIRIT, IF NOT THE LETTER OF THE AGREEMENT.' UNQTE.

3. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE ALLEGED GOE POLICY AND WHETHER THIS IS A CHANGE FROM EARLIER GOE POSITIONS WHICH, AS WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD IT, IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 043544

THAT SHIPS ARE NOT BOYCOTTED SIMPLY BY REASON OF TRANSITTING THE SUEZ CANAL ENROUTE TO OR FROM ISRAEL. INGERSOLL

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